

Marshfield Conservation Commission
147th Meeting
2 December, 2020 via Zoom

Members Present: Taber Allison, Allen Banbury, Steve Fiske, Ed Jalbert, Bradley Materick, Anne Miller, Sarah Norton, Bob Popp, and Annie Reed

Non-Members: None

Minutes: November Minutes approved unanimously as presented

Treasurer's report: None Presented

- Steve wants to use some of operating funds to purchase fertilizer for community plantings.

Motion to approve funds for soil tests and fertilizer as needed. Approved unanimously

Election of New Chair

- Annie is stepping down as Chair. She sent a spreadsheet depicting attendance at meetings over the past three years. She is frustrated with both the lack of attendance and poor communication re. attendance at meetings in order to ensure a quorum. Other members spoke of their concerns.
- Folks agreed with Annie's concern especially concerning communication outside of meetings when business is conducted via email.
- All members enjoy being on the committee and feel we've accomplishing some good work, but sometimes are busy with other commitments that conflict with meetings.
- The following suggestions were offered by members:
 - Send request for agenda items out to members a week prior to meetings;
 - Better define actions items at the meetings prior to moving forward;
 - Encourage those unable to attend to participate virtually;
 - Extend invitations to interested community members.
 - Post notice of meeting and Zoom link on Front Porch Forum

Duties of the Chair:

- 1st meeting after Town Mtg is annual meeting to reappoint officers;
- Chair develops agenda and runs the meetings and business of the commission
- Considered rotating chairs but decided to have co-chairs to split the work load;
- Annie will continue as chair and be contact with SB with help from Steve & Bob as needed; Sara will take on drafting the agenda and sending requests for items and also facilitate meetings. Annie will post agenda.

Natural Marshfield Update

- Moratorium on events until the pandemic subsides
- **Bradley** will send out email to past participants informing them of the suspension.

Waterwise Woodlands Update

- Had meeting last week. The committee had a presentation on flood resilience maps that identified parcels that are vulnerable to flooding &/or erosion.
- Map is available online; **Bradley** will send link

Tree planting at Martin Bridge

- FoW wants town to sign an agreement to plant trees for next 10 years.
- Questioned whether to restrict plantings to species that are native to Upper Winooski or at least require our approval of species composition. Decided to go with the latter wording.
- Question why the contract is limited to only Zone 7.
- **Steve** will follow up with Select Bd & FoW to require our review of species lists and expand the area of planting beyond zone 7.

Cross Vt Trail update: Tabled

- Town put in parking lot on Upper Depot to provide access to Cross Vt Trail

VACC Summit update and Gus Speth talk

- Both Sara and Bob were disappointed on Speth's talk; very general
- Paul Costello, Director of Council for Rural Development talk was much more informative. Link to his presentation is available on VACC website at vtconservation.com.

Stranahan Update

- Ed attended meeting; committee is working on Management Plan Update. They want to have MCC approve all future trails, both new and relocated. **Ed** will inform the Stranahn Committee of our acceptance of their request at their next meeting.
- Want to improve drainage on Thompson Rd, but cost estimate is \$16,000 so SB is not interested. Considering a short reroute.
- There presently appears to be no link to draft management plan
- Need help clearing blowdowns on trails. **Contact Ed if interested.**

Community Garden Update: Tabled

Rec Field Signs Update: Tabled

Plant Sale Update

- Discussion with Plainfld Con Com re. Cabot joining the sale. Plainfld CC agreed to include Cabot as it would connect the three towns.
- Anne thinks having 3 towns would not reduce work but would reduce the funds.
- Average has been \$728, but this could be reduced to \$486 if split among 3 towns.
- Anne wants to discuss with Cabot re. how they would contribute to the sale and how their involvement would increase sales. .
- Members had various opinions re allowing Cabot into the sale, but felt that maintaining the revenue source was most important.
- Decided we should have a frank conversation with Cabot about how they would contribute to increase sales prior to agreeing to them joining the sale.

New Business

- Steve reported on Forest Legacy agreement with Forest Farmers. They are getting close to an agreement.
- Mowing at Martin Bridge is still being investigated.
- **Steve** will follow up with Shawn and Rich. **Note** after the meeting we determined that the mowing contractor was likely responsible. There will be a new person next year, Ian Ackermann who was made aware of the trees and wants to visit the site in the Spring to view the plantings.
- Bob briefly mentioned a Climate Change study being undertaken by UVM which will be the most comprehensive ever done in the state. The researchers are soliciting input on topics to cover. Links to study and to provide input:
- Links at
<https://www.uvm.edu/gund/news/uvm-leads-largest-study-climate-change-vermont>
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdjuQwNAsYzgyPUyBvI9xvZKzyRW8wk7F-0Ohz5BnSwIIQ/viewform>
- Bob attended the virtual presentation of the Cabot natural areas inventory conducted by Matt Peters. He found lots of significant features in the town including significant cedar swamps and fens with associated rare plants. A final report will be available but will not provide site specific information.

Submitted by: Bob Popp

Submitted on: 5 December, 2020

Approved on: 6 January 2021